

## Message Text

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14

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-13 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 AID-20 ACDA-19 RSR-01 /161 W

----- 039716

R 100821Z JUL 73

FM AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2029

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LOURENCO MARQUES 0446

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, MOPS, MZ

SUBJ: CLAIMED FRELIMO ROCKET ATTACK ON ESTIMA

REF: A) LOURENCO MARQUES 701 OF NOV 22, 72; B) LOURENCO

MARQUES 568 OF SEP 26, 72

1. SUMMARY: REPORTS OF ROCKET ATTACK ON ESTIMA ALDEAMENTO  
IN TETE DISTRICT ALLEGEDLY CAUSING NUMEROUS CASUALTIES AND  
HEAVY DAMAGE, TURN OUT TO BE HIGHLY EXAGGERATED.

2. LACK OF RELIABILITY OF REPORTING ON MOZAMBIQUE INSURGENCY  
ILLUSTRATED BY FOLLOWING EPISODE: REPORTER COLIN SMITH OF  
LONDON OBSERVER TOLD CONGEN OFFICER JUNE 27 HE HAD ENCOUNTERED  
RHODESIAN IN TETE WHO CLAIMED THAT WHILE HE WAS WORKING IN  
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ESTIMA (SITE OF CLOSEST FULL LENGTH RUNWAY TO CABORA BASSA

AND IMPORTANT CLUSTER OF ALDEAMENTOS 20 KMS EAST OF SONGO)  
ON JUNE 18, FRELIMO GUERRILLAS LAUNCHED SEVERE ROCKET ATTACK,  
FIRING 46 ROCKETS, KILLING FIVE PORTUGUESE, DAMAGING TWO  
HELICOPTERS, AND KILLING SHEEP AND GOATS IN NEIGHBORING  
ALDEAMENTO. SMITH SAID HE HAD SEEN THREE-FOOT CHUNK OF  
ROCKET RHODESIAN HAD IN HIS TRUCK. RHODESIAN SAID HE WAS  
QUITTING HIS ESTIMA JOB AND GOING HOME. SMITH APPARENTLY  
FILED HIS STORY BEFORE CHECKING IT OUT. RECENT FRELIMO BROAD-  
CASTS HAVE AMPLIFIED THE INCIDENT.

3. AT REGULAR MONTHLY BRIEFING FOR CONSULAR CORPS JUNE 28,  
MILITARY SPOKESMAN ACKNOWLEDGED "MINOR" ATTACK ON ESTIMA  
JUNE 18, INCLUDING 122 MM ROCKET FIRE, BUT CLAIMED IT ONLY  
LIGHTLY WOUNDED ONE SOLDIER.

4. MOZAMBIQUE ARMED FORCES HIGH COMMAND COMMUNIQUE NO. 15/73  
PUBLISHED JUNE 29 REFERRED TO FRELIMO ANNOUNCEMENT THAT ITS  
ATTACK ON ESTIMA HAD CAUSED, IN ADDITION TO "ENORMOUS MATERIAL  
DAMAGE", "HUNDREDS OF DEAD AND WOUNDED AMONG PORTUGUESE  
AND FOREIGN MILITARY AND CIVILIANS", AND HAD REDUCED ESTIMA'S  
AIRFIELD INSTALLATIONS AT ASHES. COMMUNIQUE SAID IN FACT,  
ON JUNE 18 AT 2115 HOURS, "SOME GRENADES" WERE LAUNCHED  
AGAINST ESTIMA WHICH CAUSED NO MATERIAL DAMAGE AND LIGHTLY  
WOUNDED ONE MILITARY. COMMUNIQUE CONTINUED SUCH EVENT WOULD  
ORDINARILY NOT WARRANT HIGH COMMAND COMMUNIQUE; ASSERTED THERE  
WERE NO FOREIGNERS IN ESTIMA AND THAT EVERYTHING IS NORMAL  
THERE; DESCRIBED FRELIMO ANNOUNCEMENTS AS HAVING REACHED  
STAGE WHERE THEY CAN NO LONGER BE REGARDED SIMPLY AS "MON-  
STROUS DISHONESTY", BUT RATHER AS REFLECTION OF STATE OF  
DEMENTIA ON PART OF FRELIMO LEADERS.

5. PRESS PLAY CONTINUED ON JUNE 30 WITH ARTICLE ON CATTLE  
FAIR HELD IN ESTIMA ON JUNE 23 WITH HUNDREDS OF FARMERS  
PARTICIPATING, ON EXACT SPOT WHICH FRELIMO CLAIMED HAD  
BEEN REDUCED TO ASHES. "NOTICIAS" OF JULY 2 CARRIED LENGTHY  
EDITORIAL BY GUILLERME DE MELO, MOZAMBIQUE'S WINDIEST WRITER,  
POURING SCORN ON FRELIMO CLAIMS AND ON COLIN SMITH REPORT.  
SAME PAPER TWO DAYS LATER CARRIED ARTICLE BY SANTOS MARTINS,  
WRITING FROM TETE, WITH FURTHER DETAILED DENIALS.

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YM BRITISH CONGEN HUGH BYATT, WHO HAD LEFT ESTIMA ON JUNE  
18 JUST PRIOR TO ALLEGED ATTACK, TOLD ME HE HAD HEARD NOTHING  
ABOUT IT WHILE IN TETE DISTRICT, SAID HE HAD CAUTIONED SMITH  
THAT STORY WAS HIGHLY IMPROBABLE, AND ADDED HE CONSIDERED  
SMITH NAIVE AND LITTLE VERSED ON AFRICAN REALITIES. HIS  
JUDGMENT CONFIRMED BY BELGIAN AMBASSADOR IN LISBON WHO  
DURING RECENT VISIT IN MOZAMBIQUE WAS IN ESTIMA TWO DAYS AFTER  
ATTACK AND SAW NO SIGN OF ANY DAMAGE.

7. COMMENT: WE CONCLUDE ESTIMA "ATTACK" TAKES ITS PLACE WITH  
ALLEGED BOMBING OF TETE AIRPORT AND TOWNSHIP LAST NOVEMBER  
(REF A) AND SEPTEMBER SHELLING OF MUEDA (REF B) ON FRELIMO  
FICTION BESTSELLERS LIST.  
VAN OSS

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## Message Attributes

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